

U. S. COMMISSION OF FISH AND FISHERIES,

Washington, D.C., July 10, 1894.

Hon. Edwin F. Uhl,

Acting Secretary of State.

Sir:

In further reply to your communication of July 6th, transmitting one from the British Minister at this capital in reference to the damage done to the fisheries of Frazer River by the ground nets around Point Roberts, in United States territory, I beg to enclose a statement of these fisheries for the year 1892, this being the last for which we have accurate returns.

The important fish of the Frazer River is the blue back; and this species, as you will see by reference to the statistics enclosed, is taken almost exclusively in the trap nets or ground nets around Point Roberts. The total number of cases taken in 1892 -- though probably the take has been increased since that time -- is 4,000, and an average of 12 being required to a case, it would indicate that 48,000 blue backs were taken by our nets

in 1892. This represents but a very small part of the total run of this species in Fraser River in the British possessions, and considering the circumstances under which the traps are placed -- being practically on the open coast with a free passage of many miles into the Frazer River -- there is no reason to suppose that these nets do more or even as much damage to the Frazer River fisheries as the gill net fishing in the river itself, the damage being measured by the relative proportion of the species taken in the two cases.

I do not think, therefore, that there is any equity in the claim made by the British Government that the ground nets are doing excessive damage to the salmon fisheries of the Frazer River.

Your attention is further called to the fact that all the land within the limits of the United States lying around Point Roberts, constitutes a military reservation of the Government; and it is therefore entirely within the power of the Government, without reference to State legislation, either to prohibit or restrict pound net fishing. I am of the

opinion, however, that it is not desirable to do so at present. If the fisheries at Point Roberts threaten so seriously the salmon fisheries of the Frazer River, as the British Minister seems to imply, favorable action on our part in compliance with their wishes may probably be made the means of obtaining more important concessions elsewhere.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) M. McDonald.

Commissioner.

(Table omitted).